

Public Health Advisory

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For Immediate Release:

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HEALTH ADVISORY:

Update: Meningococcal Investigation

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) was notified on April 9, 2013 of a patient with meningococcal meningitis. As is always done in such situations, Public Health conducted a thorough investigation. Such investigations identify close contacts and offer preventive antibiotic treatment to any persons who had contact with the saliva or nose mucus from a patient with meningococcal disease.

Public Health has not identified any other cases of meningococcal disease associated with this patient, nor identified any linkage between this patient and cases being reported in other areas of the country.

Public Health compared the specific strain of the bacteria from this patient with other recently identified strains of meningococcal disease in Los Angeles County (LAC). Lab tests confirm that this latest strain is serogroup C, the same as the three other cases of meningococcal disease among men with a history of sexual contact with other men, reported in Los Angeles since December 2012; a preliminary reading of the genetic fingerprints by LAC Public Health Laboratory shows it is not highly related to other cases reported in Los Angeles County, Southern California, or New York City. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) are analyzing the isolate from this latest case to confirm the LAC findings.

The CDC, CDPH and Public Health do not recommend a vaccination campaign in response to the present situation of meningococcal disease in Los Angeles County. However, we understand that even single cases of this serious disease may evoke a high level of concern. We recommend that concerned individuals consult their personal health care provider to discuss prevention options, including vaccination.

For low-income and uninsured residents in Los Angeles County, the Department of Health Services is offering free meningococcal vaccine at Urgent Care sites. For a listing of sites, please visit: http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/docs/PressRelease/MeningococcalVaccineAvailable.pdf.

Public Health is in contact with community organizations and health care providers to provide timely and accurate information.

Meningococcal disease is a sporadic and uncommon infection of the blood and lining of the brain and the spinal cord. The disease can cause brain damage and hearing loss; even with prompt treatment, the mortality rate is 10-15%. Many people carry the meningococcal bacteria in their nose and throat without getting ill but can spread it to others. The bacteria can be spread by very close exposure to sneezing and coughing or direct contact with saliva (spit) or nose mucus (snot). Disease symptoms may include: fever, stiff neck, altered mental status, rash, severe headache, low blood pressure, and generalized muscle pains. Public Health rapidly investigates all medical reports of meningococcal disease and



identifies all persons who have had recent close personal contact with the saliva or nose mucus of the case and provides them with antibiotic treatment.

Public Health continues to monitor the community for new reports of meningococcal disease in cooperation with other local public health agencies, CDPH and CDC. Because of medical privacy, Public Health never comments on the details of individual cases or their contacts.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit

http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov, visit our YouTube channel at

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